

Message Text

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DRAFTED BY EB/OCA/CM/SPHARRIS

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY ROME PRIORITY

INFO AMCONSUL MILAN PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 028858

FOR AMBASSADOR FROM HARTMAN

E.O. 11652: N.A.

TAGS: BEXP, IT

SUBJECT: POSSIBLE CLOSING OF MILAN TRADE CENTER

REF: ROME 0859

1. YOUR UNDERSTANDING THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE IS CONSIDERING THE CLOSING OF THE MILAN TRADE CENTER DUE TO BUDGET CONSTRAINTS IS CORRECT. COMMERCE'S FY 77 BUDGET PRESENTATION TO THE CONGRESS PROVIDES FOR CLOSING OF TWO TRADE CENTERS SUBJECT TO CONSULTATION WITH DEPARTMENT ON WHICH SHOULD BE CHOSEN. COMMERCE HAS INDICATED TO US THAT IT BELIEVES THAT MILAN SHOULD BE ONE OF THE TWO.

2. WE HAVE REQUESTED A MEETING WITH APPROPRIATE COMMERCE OFFICIALS TO DISCUSS THE MATTER, AND WE HOPE THAT YOU WILL HAVE NO OBJECTIONS TO OUR DRAWING UPON THE VERY COGENT ARGUMENTS CONTAINED IN YOUR CABLE.

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3. COMMERCE'S INTENTION IS TO ACHIEVE CLOSING OF TRADE CENTERS BY DECEMBER 31, 1976 SO THAT SAVINGS CAN BE USED FOR OTHER PURPOSES DURING FY 77. YOUR BEST ESTIMATES OF THE SAVINGS LIKELY TO BE REALIZED BY SUCH A PRECIPITOUS CLOSING WOULD BE APPRECIATED. SUCH SAVINGS ESTIMATES SHOULD TAKE INTO ACCOUNT FINANCIAL COSTS INVOLVED IN CLOSING

MILAN, E.G. BREAKING THE TRADE CENTER'S LEASE, INDEMNIFYING LOCAL EMPLOYEES, ETC. WE WOULD, OF COURSE, BE PLEASED TO RECEIVE ANY FURTHER ARGUMENTS YOU MAY WISH TO PUT FORWARD IN ADDITION TO THOSE CONTAINED IN YOUR CABLE. THIS INFORMATION WOULD BE MOST USEFUL TO US IN OUR MEETING WITH COMMERCE WHICH WILL TAKE PLACE SOMETIME NEXT WEEK. FIGURES ON MTC PERFORMANCE WOULD BE HELPFUL.

4. AS A MATTER OF GENERAL POLICY, THE DEPARTMENT STRONGLY SUPPORTS THE TRADE CENTER CONCEPT. WITH REGARD TO THE MILAN TRADE CENTER IN PARTICULAR, THE DEPARTMENT IS SENSITIVE TO THE POSSIBLE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES OF CLOSING THE CENTER, ESPECIALLY IN THE PRESENT UNCERTAIN SITUATION IN ITALY. BE ASSURED THAT THE DEPARTMENT WILL MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO ENSURE THAT YOUR VIEWS ARE TAKEN FULLY INTO CONSIDERATION BY ALL PARTIES CONCERNED. I WILL KEEP YOU INFORMED OF SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS PERTAINING TO THIS MATTER AS THEY OCCUR. KISSINGER

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